NOTE XIV.

ON THE IMMATURE DRESS OF MICROGLOSSUS ATERRIMUS

BY

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Amongst a small number of birds, recently presented to the Leyden Museum by Mr. J. Bensbach, of late Resident at Ternate, I found a very interesting specimen of the Great Black Cockatoo from the Arfak Mountains, New Guinea, a specimen which I consider to be immature on account of the great extent of yellow on the black plumage and of the horny white color of the point of the bill and the front of the lower mandible.

Unfortunately we know very little about the immature dress of this species, no nestling having been described as yet, and what is stated to characterize the young bird is the whitish tip of the upper and the horny white front of the lower mandible, as well as the more or less developed yellow cross-bars or vermiculations on the under wing- and tail-coverts and the lower surface of the body.

No doubt these traces of yellow on the otherwise entirely black plumage are only the last remnants of a more richly yellow-barred juvenile dress, and really is such a dress represented in our above mentioned specimen, the description of which is as follows:

General color, with the exception of the tail, black, long crest-feathers fully developed, black, some of them tipped with fulvous, and nearly all showing a series of

four or five narrow lateral spots of yellow on their basal half, probably being the remainders of yellow cross-bars. Front and feathers behind the bare face pure black, crown also black, each feather with a yellow cross-bar near the base; neck mantle, back, all the upper and under wing-coverts, throat, breast, abdomen and flanks black, very conspicuously barred across with yellow, which color is more or less represented by white on the upper wing-coverts, each feather being barred across with four or five yellow bands. Vent, under and upper tail-coverts yellow with black shafts and very irregular black vermiculations; quills black, primaries on basal half of inner web yellow, varied with black, outer secondaries inside and outside edged with yellowish white near the tip, inner secondaries very broadly edged with yellow on both webs, this color being speckled with black and leaving, on the innermost secondaries, only a narrow central streak of black. Tail yellow, the two central feathers on both webs and the outer feathers on the outer web only, very richly speckled with black. All the tail-feathers have the whole shaft and a very narrow shaft-streak pure black.

Unless there can be disposed of larger material, especially of nestlings and young birds, we are not fully entitled to decide whether this specimen will represent the mere immature dress or if we have to deal with a case of xanthisme, not rarely observed amongst the Parrots.

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